	Application No.	Applicant(s)
Notice of Allowability	10/048,103	KONDO ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Amir Alavi	2624	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to *The Amendment received 29 March 2006.*

2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are *1-6,13-19,21-22 and 24-26 (now renumbered as 1-18)*.

3. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
    a) ☒ All   b) ☐ Some*   c) ☐ None   of the:
        1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
        2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____ .
        3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the
           International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
    * Certified copies not received: _____ .

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.

5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
    (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
        1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
    (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of
        Paper No./Mail Date _____.

    Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).

6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)
1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material

5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____ .
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance

9. ☐ Other _____.

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

> An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

> The application has been amended as follows:

> On the first page of specification, line 4, after the title of the invention and before Technical Field, please insert, " This Application is a 371 of PCT/JP01/04331   05/23/2001".

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

➢ The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The
present invention is directed towards an image processing method and
apparatus for extracting an object image from image data as designated by
the user. The closest prior art, Ikeda (USPN   6,510,243 B1), shows a
similar system, in which, image data is input via an image scanner, the input
image data is segmented into regions with a predetermined size, the contents
of the segmented regions are analyzed and neighboring segmented regions
are coupled if they have the same analysis contents. The attribute of a region
group obtained after coupling is determined based on the analysis result, the
image data is categorized into regions in units of attributes on the basis of the
analysis and determination results, and regions in each category are
managed together. However, Ikeda fail to address: "for coupling image data
corresponding to the designation data to form a group corresponding to an
object, detecting a feature of the image data corresponding to the designation
data and uncoupling the image data within the group, coupled by the coupling
step and corresponding to the designation data, according to each feature of
image data corresponding to the designation data". These distinct features
have been added to all independent claims and render them allowable.

> Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Contact Information

> Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Amir Alavi whose telephone number is 571-272-7386.

> The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thu.. 8:00 am thru 6:30pm.If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mr. Matthew Bella can be reached on 571-272-7778.

> ➢ The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding
>
>   is assigned is 571-273-8300. Information regarding the status of an application
>
>   may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR)
>
>   system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from
>
>   either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished
>
>   applications is available through Private PAIR only.
>
> ➢ For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov.
>
>   Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the
>
>   Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

AA
Technology Division 2624
06 April 2006